Leys News

Delivered free to over 5000 homes across the Leys

Issue 55 - June 2007

Orchard Meadow are litter angels

Picture: Roy Simmonds

Children at Orchard Meadow Primary School have been rewarded for keeping the streets clean. At a special assembly, pupils were presented with certificates for their achievements in picking up litter. The litter-picking day, which took place on Monday 26th March, saw Orchard Meadow pupils enthusiastically cleaning up the Leys streets.

The litter-picking event was a Blackbird Leys Parish Council initiative intended to get children actively involved with making the Leys a better place to be. Brian Lester, who at the time was chairman of the parish council, was on hand to award the children their certificates.

Are you worth less than 15p?

Leys organisations lost out badly in the latest round of city council grant allocations. Just how much does Oxford City Council think we're worth?

LEYS NEWS, Blackbird Leys Credit Union and the Leys Linx Centre have been allocated precisely zero city council money for this financial year.

The decisions were upheld at a meeting of Oxford City Council's executive board on 19 March. The executive board ignored the recommendations of the South East Area Committee, which gave its support to the grant applications of Leys organisations.

Leys News asked for a grant of £2,250 to help with distribution costs. The paper is distributed to 5,000 households and is estimated to have a readership of at least 15,000, which means that the grant asked for was less than 15 pence per reader.

Blackbird Leys Credit Union, which helps people on low incomes to manage their money without getting into the clutches of loan sharks, was also denied a single penny of the £3,000 requested. The credit union had asked for the money in order to part-fund a part-time staff member, but the city refused it on the grounds that they are already funding the city-wide credit union, based in Cowley Community Centre.

Children's organisations also lost out. Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground received £18,750 – 75% of the money asked for – but the Dovecote Voluntary Parent Committee received nothing. The reason given by the city council for limiting the playscheme grants was that play facilities are the primary responsibility of the county council.

A similar reason was given for allocating no city funding to the Leys Linx centre. The city council argued that the BLITZ IT Hub is no longer viable without continued Oxfordshire County Council funding, so it was not a good idea for the city council to give Leys Linx any of the £12,500 requested for staffing at BLITZ.

The Agnes Smith Advice Centre was one of the few Leys organisations to get a substantial amount of city funding. They had £45,044 already committed for this financial year, but asked for a further £25,000 because their resources are overstretched. They were granted an extra £12,000, but this will not be enough to ease the burden of work. "We're very low on people to do the work," said Jim Saunders, manager of the Agnes Smith centre. "We've introduced a waiting list for clients. We're overloaded with work and that makes it difficult to look at the future."

Although each organisation was considered separately, a pattern emerges when looking at the city's funding allocations. Leys organisations gained £34,750 from a total pot of £1,627,063 – just 2.14 percent of the total. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that there was an anti-Leys bias in the most recent funding round.

Picture: Jim Saunders

The Agnes Smith advice centre was a comparative winner in the latest funding round - but they received then half the grant requested.

Making Pop Art on the Leys

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A new face on the beat

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Brian Lester resigns from parish council

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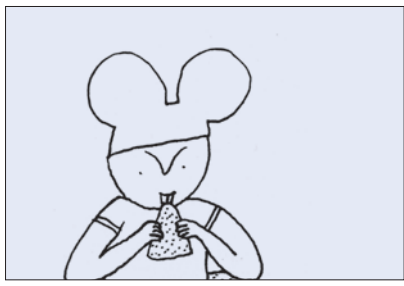

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Leys News is a not-for-profit business dedicated to providing news and information to the whole community. We are not affiliated to any political party, and we operate an equal opportunities policy. We encourage any resident to get involved in our work.

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Leys News 56

Out early August

Copy & Advertising Deadline:

Friday 13th July

Leys News acknowledges financial assistance from: Catalyst Communities Housing Association, Oxford Citizens Housing Association, Cherwell Housing Trust, Awards for All, Blackbird Leys Community Chest, and the Community Champions Fund and support from: Newsquest (Oxfordshire).

Leys News is a company limited by guarantee No. 3591512

"Estate apathy let us down"

Blackbird Leys Parish Council recently suffered a double blow when the chairman and vice-chairman resigned at the same meeting. Now the future of the parish council is uncertain. Brian Lester and Bob Avery spoke to Leys News about their reasons for resigning and their hopes for the future of the estate.

Picture: Kate Griffin

MOST PEOPLE REMEMBER Tuesday 8th May as the day Oxford United lost their chance of promotion for the season. But while football fans groaned over the last-minute penalty shoot-out, even more dramatic events were unfolding at Blackbird Leys Community Centre.

The first shock came when Brian Lester announced his resignation as parish council chairman. Shortly afterwards, Bob Avery resigned as vice-chairman and Sharon Cole stood down as treasurer. Blackbird Leys Parish Council suddenly found itself with three key positions unfilled.

But worse was to come. At the end of the meeting, both Brian Lester and Bob Avery resigned from the council altogether. Their decade-long service of the Leys community was at an end.

Both men were forced to wait until the end of the meeting to resign as councillors because otherwise the meeting would not have had the minimum number of councillors to continue.

Leys News asked Brian Lester about his reasons for leaving the council after all this time. His answer? "Apathy. The widespread apathy. I've been thinking about standing down as chairman for at least twelve months, but I kept thinking that someone's got to do it. But now, I'm not going to be blackmailed."

Significantly, Bob Avery used the same word when explaining his own reasons for quitting the parish council. "I've tried so bloody hard to get the community interested – the problem is apathy. I've put in a hundred percent and maybe unfairly expected other people to have the same level of commitment."

The parish council is now missing its chair, vice-chair and treasurer. Lee Cole is standing in as acting chairman, but his other commitments (running his own business and working as a city councillor) make it unlikely that he will be able to take on the role permanently. An even bigger problem is the low number of parish councillors. Any further resignations could cause numbers to dip beneath the five-person minimum required for the council to be a recognised body, which would mean the end of Blackbird Leys Parish Council.

Mr Lester explained: "We're allowed fourteen people on the parish council, but we've only managed to get seven out of that fourteen. On an estate with over fifteen thousand residents, that's pathetic. The other problem is that the council constitution allows a parish councillor to miss six meetings before being barred. That means that even with the full complement of parish councillors, you might hardly ever get them all in the same place."

The problem was clear at the 8th May meeting where Mr Lester and Mr Avery resigned. One councillor was ill, but two had decided to miss the meeting in order to watch the Oxford United match.

Mr Lester believes that there is "a lot of misinformation out there" about what the parish council does and who it is for. "I'd like to dispel the myth that meetings are not open to everyone. Anyone from Blackbird Leys is welcome, and so are people from what they call Greater Leys, because that's part of the Blackbird Leys parish."

As a resident, you pay an annual precept to the parish council of about £5, which is collected with your other council tax. This means that you have a say in how the money is spent, but most residents don't bother attending meetings.

Even more surprisingly, not many people seem interested in applying for a slice of the money either.

"You can apply for a grant any time throughout the year," Mr Lester explained. "We give money freely, but people don't come forward."

However, a number of good causes have benefited from parish council money in the past year: the Pathway Workshop, the Barn, various preschool projects, the PCSOs and the Church of the Holy Family. In each case, the money has made a significant difference to the organisations in question.

But the parish council is about much more than handing out grants. Bob Avery is well known for walking the estate six days a week, whatever the weather, to keep fly-tipping and graffiti under control. His work has made a huge difference to the way the estate looks, but he's still not satisfied. "After eighteen months of hard work, there was a distinct improvement, but I don't feel the work is done. The estate only looks OK because I've been keeping on top of everything by walking round it for two hours every evening. I'll really feel something has been achieved when you only need to walk round once a fortnight. As it is, when I come back from a short holiday, it's immediately obvious that things have got out of control again."

Both men are adamant that there is no turning back. They both feel very strongly that it is time for someone else to (in Mr Lester's words) "step up to the mark" and start taking some responsibility for their own estate. However, they will be keeping a watchful eye on what develops.

Brian Lester first announced his resignation publicly in a letter to Leys News. *See page 19.*

Parish council meetings take place on the first Tuesday of the month at Blackbird Leys Community Centre. All residents are welcome, whether or not you are interested in joining the council.

Want to Advertise in *Leys News*?

We have special rates for community and not-for-profit organisations
Call us on 01865 711756

Café brings support for new mums

BREASTFEEDING MUMS ON the Leys now have a place to meet each other and get extra help. The Leys Baby Café is a drop-in support group where new mums can get professional advice, or just discuss baby matters over a cup of coffee.

The café, which celebrated its official opening on May 18th, can be found in the Boiler Room café at Pegasus School, part of the Leys Children's Centre. It will be open every Friday between 9.30am and 11.30am.

Leys Health Visitor Carole Roberts said: "We want to encourage more new mums to breastfeed – the café is a really positive place to meet, make new friends and get expert advice. Breastfeeding rates are low in Blackbird Leys and we want to promote the health benefits to mums and dads in the local community."

The baby café is funded mainly by Oxfordshire County Council through the Leys Children's Centre, Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust and The Radcliffe Hospitals Trust. BMW Group Plant Oxford also gave a generous donation of £500 in support of the project.

Cllr Louise Chapman, county council cabinet member for children, young people and families, attended the official opening. She said: "New mums can feel isolated, particularly in the early months following the birth of their baby. At the café, they will be able to get the right help and support and it's a great place to develop new friendships."

A local man nicknamed "The Marathon Man" is believed to be one of Oxford's most prolific marathon runners.

Picture: Miriam Picha

Above: Mr Brackett with his collection of medals and trophies

BY MIRIAM PICHA

MR PAUL BRACKETT, 48, of Greater Leys, Oxford, became known as "The Marathon Man" because of his love of running. However, he hasn't always been interested in running. For years, Mr Brackett's main interest was his local pubs, which resulted in him becoming an alcoholic.

Having suffered from alcoholism for many years, and with the prospect of losing his wife and children due to his drinking, he became so desperate that he gave himself an ultimatum and vowed to give up the demon drink and change his life for good.

With a lot of help and support from his wife and a lot of determination on his part, he was finally able to give up drinking and has not drank any alcohol for the last fifteen years.

Once he gave up alcohol, Mr Brackett looked around for ways in which he could regain control of his life. He decided to become involved in a more healthier way of life, resulting in him taking up marathon running, which he says became his saviour.

Before Mr Brackett turned to alcohol, which he gave up fifteen years ago, he and his five brothers used to compete in various races around the country.

And since he restarted running again in the year 2000, he has competed in approximately 200 races.

Prior to the year 2000, he had taken part in and completed the London marathon and the Dublin marathon no less than three times. He has now set himself a personal goal of running in no less than at least 12 marathons in one year starting October 2006. He is well within range of that target, having completed a total of seven so far, with another two due before the end of May.

Mr Brackett is very modest. He hates to blow his own trumpet, maintaining that he is just a novice.

He says, "there are veterans of marathons in their 60's and 70's still running and others have competed in more marathons that me".

Daughter Kayleigh 17 says, "I grew up with my dad running and if he was to give it up it would feel strange because we are so used to him running. I am interested in dancing. Marathon is not for me but I think what my dad is doing is great. I work, so I can't go to many of his races, but I try and support him as much as I can".

Mr Brackett has another child, a son David, 22, who is also interested in running. David recently completed the five-mile Cutteslow Park race along with ten family members and friends, including Mrs Brackett.

Speaking about his wife, a very emotional Mr Brackett maintains that he couldn't have done any of this without his wife.

He says, "my wife is very supportive. She has had to put up with a lot."

In between races, Mr Brackett likes to keep fit by running, swimming, going to the gym and taking part in cross country races.

Coffee, learning and aromatherapy

Jenny Martin, head of the Leys Children's Centre, gives parents and carers the latest news about the help available.

THIS MONTH WE have some new courses running. An aromatherapy course is running for the first time at Cuddesdon Corner. Participants could find out how different essential oils help with relaxation, and try out different aromas to see what works for them.

For parents of children who are in pre-school or starting at school Joy Clough is running some workshops and courses just for you. Her course on a Friday has activities to do with children, to help them with their learning. She also talks about parents getting some support for their own skills and learning.

At Windale in June/ July there are lots of different things on for parents and carers. There are new courses led by parent leaders from Parentline Plus and Family Links led by family workers. Simply getting together with other parents can be a great support.

The Baby Café is up and running in the Boiler Room café at Pegasus School now every Friday morning. New mums are finding great support and meeting other women who are breastfeeding.

One of our core aims is to help children to be healthy. To help us achieve this, Leys Children's Centre staff recently participated in Tackling Childhood Obesity training.

Many families have told us they find it hard to talk about children's lifestyle and diet because they feel blamed by professionals. Positive approaches which focus on solutions rather than problems are working well.

Anyone who lives in the local community is encouraged to come along to any of the Leys Children's Centre activities.

The latest 'What's On at The Leys Children's Centre' in this edition of the paper (page 8) shows that there are many different ways that you can meet up with other families who have young children. We're always interested to hear about other courses or activities you'd like to see in The Leys.

If you've not been before, you can just turn up, or phone 01865 773263 *to get more information.*

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- Area hire

Lots of fun at Blackbird Leys pool

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- Adult & family only sessions
- Swimming Lessons
- Ladies only session
- Primetime session
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Contact centres for information:

Barton Pool	01865 467290	Hinksey Pool	01865 467079
Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre	01865 467020	Oxford Ice Rink	01865 467002
Blackbird Leys Pool	01865 467040	Peers Sports Centre	01865 467095
Ferry Sports Centre	01865 467060	Temple Cowley Pools	01865 467124

Arts and Culture Focus supported by BMW Group Plant Oxford

BMW Group
Plant Oxford

Treachery and Passion at the Castle

This summer, thousands of people will enjoy Shakespeare's plays - from inside a former prison.

CREATION THEATRE COMPANY will be staging three open-air shows at Oxford Castle, which was a working prison until 1996. The Castle Garden, formerly the prison exercise yard, provides an atmospheric and appropriate setting for Creation's production of Hamlet. The tale of treachery, murder and madness will unfold in a space notorious for its dark history and ghostly sightings.

The forthcoming production will be Creation Theatre's third staging of Hamlet. The previous two performances were in equally unusual locations: the first on the banks of the river Cherwell and the second at BMW Group Plant Oxford.

Creation's 11th summer season will also include two other open-air shows at Oxford Castle. The Taming of the Shrew will be performed in the Unlocked Castleyard, at the foot of the Castle Mound, from the 16th July. Shakespeare's fast-paced, witty comedy looks set to sparkle when given the vibrant Creation treatment under the direction of Heather Davies.

Later on in the summer, the theatre company will be tackling something completely different. The Oxford Passion uses an original script to tell the story of Christ's life in a contemporary style. Creation will be drawing on the street theatre tradition of the mediaeval mystery play for this production, involving a large community chorus made up of Oxford residents.

Oxford Castle's heavy walls guard the secrets of a grim history, but it has plenty of happy secrets too: for a start, it's home to a Krispy Kreme, making it one of the few places in Britain (outside London) where you can buy a sinful but delicious Krispy Kreme doughnut made to the original 1930s American recipe. There's also slightly healthier fare at the various bars, cafes and restaurants dotted around the castle grounds.

With Creation Theatre's ticket prices starting at just £8, almost everybody can afford to come along to Oxford Castle and enjoy at least one play during the summer season. Unlike the unlucky prisoners of the past, it's a fair bet that you won't want to leave in a hurry.

Performance dates are as follows:

Hamlet
1st June – 28th July

The Taming of the Shrew
16th July – 25th August

The Oxford Passion
1st August – 8th September

Box office: 01865 766266

Calling all Oxford artists...

Could you be part of the Oxford Arts Festival? The organisers are on the lookout for all kinds of artists.

THE OXFORD ARTS Festival is back for its second year. Plans are afoot for a multimedia event featuring all kinds of different artists: dance groups, poets, drama groups, musicians, visual artists and more.

The purpose of the Oxford Arts Festival is to showcase talent from around the country as well as giving Oxford people an opportunity to explore the large range of talent on offer from their own city.

The music element of the festival alone will feature a diverse selection of genres, including indie, rock, pop, hip-hop, electro, classical, experimental, folk and dub. Other kinds of art will be represented in a similarly eclectic way.

The festival will take place in many different locations around Oxford city centre, which means that people can enjoy the festival and take in Oxford's sights at the same time.

The festival takes place over a single weekend: Friday 28, Saturday 29 and Sunday 30 September 2007.

It's not too late for local artists to get involved. Anyone interested in showcasing their work at this year's festival should send an example of their work with full contact details (name, address, contact number, email) to:

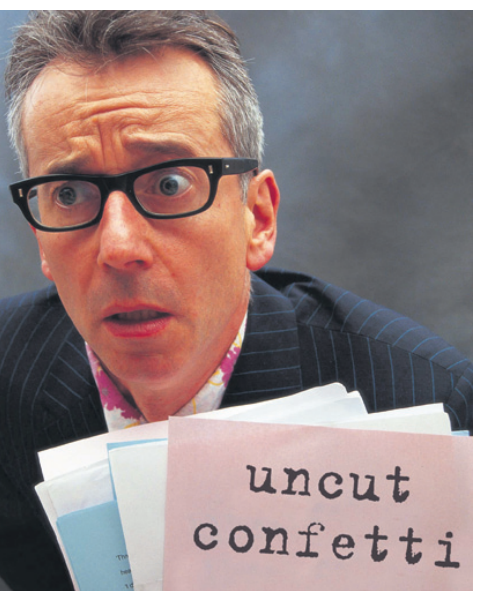
The Oxford Arts Festival
PO Box 339
Kidlington
OX5 NAY

The deadline for applications is the 31st July 2007. Line up will be announced on Friday 17th August 2007.

Wristbands giving admission to the event are already on sale at www.wegottickets.com. A pass for the whole weekend is £12, while passes for a single day of the festival are £7. Under 18s can buy tickets for £4, which gets you into all under-18 venues for the whole weekend.
More information can be found at: www.oxfordartsfestival.com

John Hegley's from Luton, He's not hifalutin'...

BY ANDREW CHAPMAN



"Why are you late?" sang John Hegley pointedly when someone snuck in shortly after his show at the Oxford Playhouse began. To her credit, she sang back ("There was a lot of traffic"). Stern but playful, and involving audience participation, this set the tone for the whole show, which went down a storm with the few hundred people attending. The Playhouse was by no means packed – half of the stalls and one row of the gallery (poor fools who thought they might escape Hegley's eye) – but with his easy command of the audience and trademark blend of wist and wit, he made it seem like the more intimate venue it perhaps should have been.

The performance was part of a tour to promote Hegley's new poetry collection, Uncut Confetti, though his recitals dipped into old favourites as well as more recent material, and at one point he even invited an audience member to give him a page number at random. Punctuating the show were various numbers on his mandolin ("Alright Oxford, let's rock"), which had the audience finger-snapping, clapping or even pretending to tramp across New Zealand.

Hegley comes across as what might result from a bizarre genetic experiment blending Alan Rickman with Woody Allen. He brings the lugubrious sternness of Severus Snape – which we all know is a cover for a kind heart – to the latter's angst-with-glasses, and adds a dash of his own unique 'suburban folk'. Subverting even Stevie Smith, he imagines looking out of a bus to see someone "not waving, but window cleaning".

Hegley clearly took stock of his audience very quickly – all ages were there, but a surprising number of children, who he entertained with lighter pieces about teas and trees and bees, though always without patronising.

With everyone he shared his belief in the imagination, and exploring it through the sound of words: this is a man who rhymes 'furniture' with 'return it to ya'. His work would probably seem a little flat on the page, a few puns and observations, but it's the man and the mandolin that bring it all alive and make it mean something.

Confident enough to predict an encore, Hegley filled it with an audience-enhanced version of his classic 'Luton Bungalow', a poem which gives him full range to blend poignant sentiment with self-deprecatory humour. We were singing it on the way home.

Blackbird Leys - 50 years

Calendar of Confirmed Events:

JUNE

50 YEARS CELEBRATION COMMUNITY QUILT
Wednesdays 6pm - 9pm, starting Wednesday 6th June.

See box opposite.

'FATHERS ARE SPECIAL' EVENT
June 2007
Cuddesdon Corner Family Centre

Contact:
UK Dads Posse
Carlton Gabbidon
07951 397744
www.blackbird50.info

JULY

'50 PHOTOS OF BLACKBIRD LEYS' COMPETITION
Throughout July
FREE!
Display of photos in the Glow Hall at the Community Centre.

Photos must be submitted to Leys Linx by July 1st, 2007 and the top 50 shots will be displayed and voted on throughout July.

Contact:
Leys Linx
01865 401098
www.blackbird50.info

AUGUST

U-16 Table-Tennis Tourney
25th August, 2007

The Leys Table Tennis King and Queen will be crowned on 25th August, 2007
at the Church Hall. If you live on the Leys and are aged between 10 and 16
years - and are not chicken, pick up a registration form at the Leys Linx Centre and start practising; you may just pick up the Sports World vouchers reserved for 1st & 2nd place winners in the male and female categories.
Registration forms are available from the Leys Linx Centre at Blackbird Leys (telephone 01865 714492). You can also email Patrick Mukholi for further enquiries, or telephone 01865 748284.

Organiser:
Oxford Youth Works.

LEYS CDI SUMMER PLAYSCHEME
Throughout August,
Youth Centre at the Community Centre and other venues.

The 2007 playscheme will put on 50 special summer activities for local youngsters to enjoy!

Contact:
Marsha Jackson
07731 144056
www.blackbird50.info

CIRCLE DANCE
4th August
Glow Hall, Blackbird Leys
5pm - 8pm

See box below for details.

SEPTEMBER

LEYS FAIR
Saturday, September 8, 2007
12 noon to 5pm.
Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre & Park

The ever popular annual end of summer community get together with a BBL 50 theme. Music, funfair, circus skills, dance, displays, stalls, Laser Quest, under 8s area, sports, balloon modelling, face painting, bouncy castles and lots and lots of other free activities!

Contact:
Natalie Huckin,
07733 338593
www.blackbird50.info

The Labyrinth Challenge.
22nd September
10am to 4pm,
The Church of the Holy Family, Cuddesdon Way, Blackbird Leys.

How would you like to step outside your busy life for 30 minutes, into a labyrinth of relaxing and meditative music? Defuse your emotional pressure with the Labyrinth Challenge. See if you can come out the same person as you entered!

Participants will negotiate a musical and spiritual obstacle course that they can drop out of at any time... or run over and over again.

No booking required. Just drop in on the day. Email Patrick Mukholi for further enquiries, or telephone: 01865 748284.

Organised by:
Oxford Youth Works & Blackbird Leys Churches.

OCTOBER

LAUNCH OF THE 50th ANNIVERSARY RECIPE BOOK
Blackbird Leys Youth & Community Centre.

Contact:
Kate Dunsdon
07733 338593
www.blackbird50.info

NOVEMBER

LEYS PLAYGROUPS WINTER SHOW
Wednesday, November 28
10.30am, FREE!
Blackbird Leys Youth & Community Centre.

Uncle Brian takes the under 5's on a journey of Christmas wonder!

Contact:
Paul Isaacs
Centre Manager
01865 401098

DECEMBER

LEYS CHRISTMAS LIGHTS COMPETITION
First three weeks of December
FREE!
All Blackbird Leys homes!

Will your display be voted 'best on Blackbird Leys'?

Contact:
OCHA (Oxford Citizens Housing Association)
www.blackbird50.info

SENIORS QUALIDAY
Saturday, 15th December
6.30pm onwards
Blackbird Leys Youth & Community Centre.

The senior users at the Community Centre have an old fashioned 'qualiday' celebration - music by Colin Smith.

Contact:
Blackbird Leys Community Association 01865 435954
www.blackbird50.info

Look out for further details of these events:

EMAIL THE WORLD
Lead group: BLITZ

FUN RUN/CANCER RESEARCH
Lead group: BBL Parish Council (Carole Roberts)

BLACKBIRD LEYS HISTORY EXHIBITION
Lead group: BBL Library/Carole Newbiggin

BLACKBIRD LEYS JUNIOR 6-a-side COMPETITION
Lead group: Oxford Blackbirds FC

50 PIECES OF ART
EXHIBITION
Lead group: BLAG (Blackbird Leys Arts Group)

AFRICAN CARIBBEAN YOUTH PROJECT EVENTS
Lead group: ACP (Dolcie Obhiozele)

HEALTHY FOOD/HEALTHY HEART
Lead group: Oxford Healthy Living Partnership and the Health Trainers

LEYS COMMUNITY CHURCH EVENTS
Lead: Richard Colbrook
PLANT THE LOGO!
Lead group: Oxford City Parks
The BBL 50 logo will be created in a spectacular show of summer plants outside the parade of shops

LEARNING COMMUNITY PROJECT EVENTS
Lead group: LCP (Jim Barlow)

50s NIGHT!
Lead group: BBL Parish Council (Carole Roberts)

For more information go to www.blackbird50.info

Leys News Mystery Picture

WIN £20!

HAVE A CHANCE of winning £20 in cash by telling Leys News where in the Leys you can see this green thing.

Send your answers on a postcard to Leys News, 26 Kingfisher Green, Greater Leys, Oxford OX4 7BX. Send your answers by the 30th June.

The first answer to be pulled from the Editor's hat wins.

Circle Dance event

When: 4th August 5pm – 8pm
Where: Glow hall, Blackbird Leys

SUITABLE FOR ADULTS and children aged 10 or over. No experience of any kind of dancing necessary, the dances will be taught on the day.

The event is free however you will need to pay a deposit of £4 to reserve your place (because we need to make sure we have the right number of people turn up for the circle!) which will be returned on the day.
The dances won't be too strenuous but you can sit one or two of them out if you need a break.

If you do not want to join in the dance you are still welcome to come along with some food and drink (no alcohol) at 7pm and join in the celebration

For more information or to reserve your place phone Jim on 07979 733848 or Anna on 07974 791319

. . . What's on in the Leys . . .

The What's On section is getting bigger and better. It's now organised by topic instead of by date, so you can go straight to the section that interests you. We've also changed the name because "What's On Weekly" doesn't give scope for less regular events.

Leys News also has plans to display event listings on our brand new website (see page 17). So please keep telling us about any events you'd like us to publicise. It's an easy and completely free way of telling thousands of Leys residents about your event.

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Dovecote Family Drop-in (in partnership with Leys Kiddies Club) is for 0-5 year-olds and their families. Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays (term time only), 9.30am-2.30pm. Generally held at the Dovecote in the Green Room, but could be subject to change. Cost: 75p per drop-in. Contact Ruth Brown on 07985 637487.

Beavers (aged 6-8) meet at the Blackbird Leys Scout Hut on Sandy Lane. Tuesdays 5pm-6pm. Ring (01865) 714104.

Cubs (aged 8-10½) meet at the Blackbird Leys Scout Hut on Sandy Lane. Tuesdays 6.30pm-8pm. Ring (01865) 714104.

Dovecote After School Club for 5-12 year olds is Monday-Thursday, 3.15pm-5pm, at the Dovecote. Cost: 75p per session.

The Barn Youth Project, Nightingale Avenue. Wednesdays 7.30-9pm. Music, art, sports, dance, tuck shop, etc. Discos during holidays. 50p per session. Free access to IT equipment and internet.

Blackbird Leys Youth Centre, Blackbird Leys Road. Variety of activities and advice for young people. Contact on (01865) 772886.

Scouts (aged 10½-15 ½) at the Blackbird Leys Scout Hut on Sandy Lane. Thursdays 7pm-8.30pm. Ring (01865) 714104.

Cheerleading for girls aged 6 and over is at the Leisure Centre on Pegasus Road. Tuesdays 4.30pm. 50p a session. Run by the Leys Youth Programme. Contact Matt and Katie Gamble on (01865) 427075.

5-a-side football for girls is at the Leisure Centre on Fridays. 5-6pm for years 3-6. 6-7pm for years 7 upwards. 50p a session. Run by the Leys Youth Programme. Contact Matt and Katie Gamble on (01865) 427075.

5-a-side football for boys is at the Leisure Centre on Fridays. 4-5pm for school years 3-6. 5-6pm for years 7-9-9. 6-7pm for years 10 and 11. 50p a session. Run by the Leys Youth Programme. Contact Matt and Katie Gamble on (01865) 427075.

CHURCHES

Church of the Holy Family is on Cuddesdon Way. Sunday service at 10-11am with lively children's church. Evening service most Sundays at 6.30pm. The Church of the Holy Family is a local ecumenical partnership of Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, Moravian and United Reformed denominations. Ring (01865) 396241.

Leys Community Church. Sunday service at the Holy Family Church. Includes special activities for children and young people. Starts at 3.30pm. Contact Richard and Kate Colbrook (01865) 714153.

Sacred Heart Catholic Church is on Sawpit Road. Sunday Mass is at 9.30am and 6pm. Ring (01865) 778454.

COMPUTERS

Blackbird Leys IT Zone is at the Leys Linx Centre on Blackbird Leys Road. Learn about and use computers, the internet, email, scanning, printing (5p black & white, 20p colour), digital photography and video. Training courses available. Monday-Friday 9.30-4.30pm, Saturday 9.30-1.30pm. Ring John Clifford (01865) 714492.

LEISURE

Boxing training is at the Youth Centre (part of the Leys Linx Centre on Blackbird Leys Road). Tuesday and Thursday evenings, 7.30-9pm. Run by Keith Templar. Contact on (01865) 715815.

Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre is on Pegasus Road. Open Monday-Friday 8am-11pm, Saturday 9am-8pm, Sunday 9am-9pm. Variety of leisure activities and classes. Rooms and facilities available for private hire. Ring (01865) 467020.

Legs, Bums & Tums is at the Leisure Centre. Wednesdays 6-7pm.

Tae Kwon Do is at the Leisure Centre. Tuesdays 6-7pm.

Body Conditioning is at the Leisure Centre. Mondays 10-11am.

Pilates for Beginners is at the Leisure Centre. Tuesdays 7-7.45pm.

Blackbird Leys Swimming Pool is behind the community centre on Blackbird Leys Road. General swimming times are Mondays & Fridays 5.45-6.45pm, Saturdays & Sundays 11.15am-1pm. Other sessions available include over 60s, women-only, water workout and parent & toddler classes. Ring (01865) 467042.

Irish Dancing is at Sacred Heart Hall. Wednesdays and Thursdays, 5pm.

OLDER PEOPLE

Silver Circle meets at the Blackbird Leys Community Centre on Blackbird Leys Road. Tuesdays 1-3.30pm. Meet for trips, chats, tea, and bingo. Everyone welcome. Ring (01865) 435954.

Golden Circle meets for bingo, trips and tea at the Blackbird Leys Community Centre on Blackbird Leys Road. Thursdays 1pm-3.30pm. Everyone welcome. Ring (01865) 460592.

Monday lunch club for the over-50s (formerly run by Age Concern) is in the Clockhouse, 10am-1.30pm.

Thursday lunch club for the over-50s is at The Barn, 10am-2pm.

Leys Over 60s Club. Holy Family Church Hall. Wednesdays from 1.30pm until 4pm. Meet for trips, bingo, card games, a chat and free refreshments.

50 Years Celebration Community Quilt

Group: Blackbird Leys In Stitches
When: Wednesdays 6pm - 9pm. Starting Wednesday 6th June 2007
Where: Blackbird Leys Art Group building

TO CELEBRATE THE 50th year of Blackbird Leys we will be working to produce a community quilt and would love to have as many people as possible involved. No materials or experience are necessary however we welcome ideas and enthusiasm!

After the quilt is completed we will open the group up to anyone who would like to sew or knit their own projects while having a chat and a laugh with others. The group is free however donations are welcome. If you are interested please give us a ring or just turn up on the 6th June. If you would like to be involved but cannot make the first session then give one of us a call.

Contact Details:
Anna: 07974 791319 or Sasha 07979 708 014

Calling all needle-women and men past and present! If you could spare any scraps of material, buttons, sequins, ribbons, embroidery threads or anything else which might be useful then please get in touch on one of the numbers above. Thanks!

This photo of a community quilt is reproduced with the kind permission of Laura Evonne Steinman of the Hand In Hands Art group.

If you have a regular event that you would like to see in the What's On section, please tell us! Write to What's On, Leys News, 26 Kingfisher Green, Greater Leys, Oxford OX4 7BX.
Or simply e-mail editor@leysnews.co.uk, putting "What's On" in the e-mail's subject heading. We'd love to hear from you.

. . . church news. . .

The Church of the Holy Family

Any enquiries to: the Rev'd Fleur Houston (774672) and the Rev'd David Parry (778728)

Regular Services: All are welcome to our regular Sunday communion services at 10.00 am - there is special provision for children. And if you prefer a more meditative style of worship why not come along at 6.30 pm, for Time Out - for those of us who need a bit of space.

On Tuesdays at 9.00am we have short morning prayers for anyone to attend. On Wednesdays we have prayers for the Leys community at 1.00 pm.

Every Sunday there are services with Eucharist at 10.00 am; for part of the service, children may attend our lively children's church. At 6.30 pm Time Out is a short reflective service with different styles of worship each week.

The Leys Community Church

The Leys Community Church meets at 3.30pm on a Sunday afternoon at the Church of the Holy Family, Blackbird Leys. Meetings include special activities for children and young people. Please phone Richard and Kate Colbrook on 01865 714153 for more details.

We are a lively family church which believes that people are important and Jesus can make a difference to our daily lives. Our Sunday meetings are informal and relaxed.

We also support work in the local community including the Leys Youth Programme.

Sacred Heart Catholic Church

Serving Blackbird Leys, Greater Leys, Garsington and Cuddesdon.
Fr. David Hartley, Tel 01865 779658.

Regular Services:
Sundays: Masses 9.30am and 6.00pm
Mondays: Mass 9.00am
Tuesdays: Rosary 7.00pm and Mass 7.30pm
Thursdays: Adoration 6.30pm, and Mass 7.00pm
Fridays: Mass 9.00am
Saturday: Mass 10.00am, and Confessions 10.30am

Sunday 10th June: First Holy Communion Mass at 11am

Sunday 24th June: day pilgrimage to Walsingham in Norfolk organised by the Catholic Caribbean association. Adults £20, children £10 More details from Olive Smith, 01865 771092

30th June: Summer Fete, 2pm at Sacred heart Church.

What's on at the Leys Children's Centres – June 2007

* childcare available

		MORNING	AFTERNOON
MONDAY	**Cuddesdon Corner** 01865 773263	**Drop-in for babies and parents/carers** 9.30 – 11.30am. Contact Mikko Enticknap 01865 773263 **Literacy class** 10.00am – 12.00pm* Phone the Able Centre 01865 776334	**Aromatherapy and Relaxation*** 1.00 – 2.00pm, starts 4 June (7 week course) Contact Claire Johnson 01865 773263 **The Listening Centre** 5.00 – 9.00pm Phone 0870 2419025
	Pegasus 01865 777175	**Aromatherapy 9.30am – 10.45am** Contact Jane Caffyn 01865 777175	
	Windale 01865 777796	**Family links** 9.30 – 11.30am. Contact Sara Collingwood 01865 777796 **ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages)– Working in Childcare*** 9.30am – 2.30pm. Contact Jim Barlow 079 202 11 405	
TUESDAY	**Cuddesdon Corner**	**PEEP for 1s,** 9.30 – 10.30am. Call 01865 395145 **Baby massage,** 9.45 – 10.45am Contact Monika 01865 778034	**Stay and Play,** 12.30pm – 2.30pm **Creative Group*,** for children and parents 12.30pm – 2.00pm. Starting 17 April **The Listening Centre,** 5.00pm – 9.00pm
	Pegasus		**Family Links Boiler Room Café,** 6.30 - 8.30pm Contact Eugenie Winter 01865 777175
	Windale	**HIPPOS** group run by and for parents with children with special needs 10.00am – 12.00pm (meets monthly starting 5th June) Contact Melissa Sheard 079 501 25 810	**Computer drop-in sessions,** 3.30 - 4.30pm Contact Sara Collingwood 01865 777796
WEDNESDAY	**Cuddesdon Corner**	**ESOL class*,** 9.30 – 11.30am (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Phone the Able Centre 01865 776334	**Teenage and Pregnant** (TAP1) **Teenage and Pregnant** (TAP2) 1.00 – 3.00pm **The Listening Centre** 5.00– 9.00pm
	Orchard Meadow	**PEEP Baby Group, 1.30 – 2.30pm** Call 01865 395145	
	Pegasus	**Talkaway Workshop** 9.00 – 10.30am, starts 13 June Contact Lisa Dobraszczyk 077 662 57 953	
	Windale	**PEEP for 2s,** 9.30am–10.30am in The Dovecote. Call 01865 395145 **Working in Childcare NVQ level 2,** 9.00am – 2.30pm *, Contact Jim Barlow 079 202 11 405 **Less Shouting, More Co-operation,** 5 week course run by ParentlinePlus 12.45pm– 2.45pm, starting 13 June. Contact Sara Collingwood 01865 777796	
THURSDAY	**Cuddesdon Corner**	**Family Links,** 9.00 – 11.00am, Contact Debbie Scrivener 01865 773263 **Agnes Smith Advice Centre** (for advice on benefits), 10am–1pm, Contact Jackie Knight 01865 770206 **Health Visitor Drop-in,** 11.15am–1.00pm **The Listening Centre,** 5.00– 9.00pm	
	Pegasus		**Salsa Dancing for parents,** 2.00pm – 3.00pm contact Anne Wells 01865 777175
	Windale	**PEEP** for 1s, 9.30 – 10.30am Call 01865 395145	
FRIDAY	**Cuddesdon Corner**	**Keeping Up with the Children*** 9.00 – 11.30am Contact 01865 773263 for details Parents Meeting (to share ideas) 10.30 – 11.30am	**Stay & Play lunch** 11.30am – 2.00pm (small fee)
	Pegasus	**The Baby Café (supporting breastfeeding)** The Boiler Room Café, 9.30 – 11.30am Contact Carole Roberts 01865 788688 **Family links, 9.30 – 11.30am** Contact Anne Wells 01865 777175	
	Windale	**Parents Coffee Morning, 9.00 – 11.00am**	
SATURDAY	**Cuddesdon Corner**	**Dad's Zone,** Every 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month. 10.00am – 12.00pm. 9th and 23rd June	

Coming Soon: Let's Get Healthy! Computer Course and Drop In sessions, Family walks and History Alive walks

Children's Centres
for families in Oxfordshire

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

Supported by SureStart

New face on the beat

A NEW PCSO begins work on the Leys this month. James Kachellek recently completed training as a Police Community Support Officer and is now out on the Leys beat with colleagues Laura Jones, Simone O'Dell and Mari-Claire Tutty.

28-year-old James is pleased to be working here, as he specifically requested an East Oxford posting. He has already spent several weeks here as part of his on-the-job training, and has used Leys News to bring him up to date with local events.

The People's People have done it again!

Last time we heard about the People's People, they were organising a magical Christmas dinner. Lex Francis, one of the group, tells us how they repeated their success with an Easter meal.

DUE TO THE success of Christmas, the People's People did it again on Easter Sunday. Due the shorter timescale for planning the event, they decided to have a small meal to thank those who had worked so hard at Christmas. The number soon grew once word spread and before they knew it they were serving 42 people a two course meal consisting of roast leg of lamb, steamed fish, fried chicken, rice & peas, broccoli & cauliflower in cheese sauce, roast potatoes, leeks, mashed carrot & swede and gravy, followed by strawberry cheese cake and gateaux.

So you can see that what was originally a small low key event soon turned out to be a much bigger occasion.

The food was fantastic; the atmosphere was amazing. It was a lovely day. The children played games together outside, some congregated in the hall chatting and sharing stories, others were busy helping with the food preparation, laying the tables and welcoming those who attended. The three Fs that the People's People base their events on were most definitely in abundance: Food, Fellowship and Fun!

The next community event will be in October for Harvest Festival. If you can contribute to this event in any way or would be interested in coming along on the day, please get in touch with the People's People by dropping into the local Leys Linx Centre on Blackbird Leys Road. Look out for ticket sales and confirmation of date and times closer to the event.

We also have plans to involve the whole community in creating a tablecloth. We hope that this project will bring people together in creating something wonderful. If you would like to get involved, please contact us as soon as possible.

Share your kitchen secrets

QUICK AND COMFORTING macaroni cheese.... Mum's magic fruit salad... We all have a recipe that's close to our heart, but now you have the chance to share it with other people on the Leys.

Oxford Healthy Living Partnership is putting together a book of people's favourite recipes. You are invited to take part by sharing your own special recipe.

The ambitious plan for the book is to include 50 recipes, one for every year of the Leys, to tie in with this year's anniversary celebrations. It is also supposed to reflect the different backgrounds of Leys residents.

Kate Dunsdon, Local Food Development Officer, said: "We're putting the book together to celebrate the diversity of people living on the estate. We're hoping to include recipes from many different cultures. This is an opportunity for people to share their experiences of food."

Leys News readers are invited to send their recipes (preferably for low-cost, healthy meals) to Kate Dunsdon at Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre on Pegasus Road. Alternatively, you can email them to kdunsdon@oxford.gov.uk . All recipes should be your own - not taken from a recipe book.

It might be difficult to give up the secret of your grandmother's legendary roast chicken, but the rest of the Leys will thank you for it.

Green Fingers

By Stuart Mabbutt

Indoor Alternatives

Yet another question has been put to me by a reader, and it never ceases to amaze me the variety of subjects and issues you put to me to answer in these articles.

WELL, HERE IS a new subject, and one which I think I have only mentioned in very distant passing during previous scribblings.

This month's question is, "If I want to have more interesting indoor plant displays than those which my friends have, which ones should I get?" As you all know, many of us grow cacti, African violets, ferns and palms, but I have been thinking hard for some more unusual alternatives.

We must remember too, that indoor plants like differing environments just as their outdoors cousins do. It is all too easy to keep houseplants in too hot or dry conservatories, when they may not be suited for those conditions. Many of us forget all the gardening rules when we come indoors, and we spend a fortune on indoor plants that we either don't know how to look after or more importantly, are not suited to our home and its environment.

So for something a little different for the house, try growing Sanchezia as it is a very striking shrubby type plant, but it needs a humid environment, in a brightly-lit location but out of direct sunlight. Its compost needs to be kept moist permanently and you will need to mist the leaves with water twice daily. It can be repotted every spring and stem cuttings can be taken during the middle of summer.

This shrub has multiple clusters of tubular yellowish flowers in the autumn, but it is mainly grown for its leaves, which are very long and green with striking yellow veins. This plant will grow up to 4ft tall and will need pruning to shape it and keep it under control each spring.

The other plant that comes to mind that I would strongly recommend is Nerine. For this plant you need to locate it in the sunniest spot available in the house. Unlike Sanchezia above, it doesn't need to be in humid conditions. It just needs to be kept moist all year round except the period between the leaves becoming yellow in May and the new growth shoots reappearing in late summer or early autumn, during which time allow them to dry out.

Nerine can be propagated by removing the small bulbs that form around the larger main bulb and planting them in well drained but slightly moist compost in August. But if you are only starting out though, and manage to get hold of the initial main bulb (it may need some hunting out to find an outlet who sell these wonderful plants, though) plant it in some slightly moist well drained potting compost, in a 6 inch pot during August. Remember to leave the top of the bulb exposed and not completely buried.

Only begin watering when growth starts to appear. The flowers to expect are white or pink, and look like beautiful dwarf lilies. The leaves do not appear until after flowering. These bulbs should last for many, many, many years as long as you allow them to dry out and rest from May to late summer. The main bulb should only need repotting every 3 years at the most.

Don't worry if you don't have "green fingers", these two houseplants are an easy place to start.

Enjoy.

STUART MABBUTT

. . . LEYS NEWS STORY . . .

Jonny Lost -
Alone and Missing - Part 3

By Colin Goundry

Young Jonny has inexplicably gone missing after an evening visit to his girlfriend's house. Mum Sarah is frantic and police have yet to find any leads.

On Saturday when Sarah awoke, the early morning frost had covered the roads, lanes and meadows. The local police came again. Sarah and Greg were frantic with worry and questions. The phone was ringing continually and the neighbours came. The local radio station was putting appeals out and the village was in turmoil - Jonny had vanished.

Anna was listening to the local radio station over breakfast with her mum when she heard the story. Her mum, Pauline, stopped what she was doing. She and Anna looked at each other when realisation set in. Anna broke down and her mum rushed to her and held her.

The search continued and there were teams of offices, neighbours and farmers searching the lanes, fields and rivers.

Anna and Pauline arrived at Jonny's home and Anna was beside herself with love, loss and longing. Sarah held her when she saw the grief the poor girl was sharing with her.

The house was full of people and the only question on everybody's mind was what had happened. The community was in outrage. The radio news was every fifteen minutes. The papers were reporting the story as it unfolded. The small village was in grief. The fear and compassion was real - everything was so close to everyone's homes.

Family and friends came and went, one after the other. They were all waiting for news, a breakthrough.

Sarah walked the lanes late that night after everyone had gone home. She needed to be doing something. Her loving son Jonny was out there somewhere. Hope was all that kept her going. The cold wind was tearing against her, pulling her onwards.

This is how it was to be, day after day, night after night. Jonny had just gone and there was nothing Sarah could do to stop it.

The story was told and talked about, at first locally and then nationally. Sarah was to go on television and ask her son to come home: "To anybody who saw him, or has any information - anything..."

Night after night Sarah lay, not knowing. Always hoping that the morning would bring Jonny home to her.

THE LEISURE CENTRE
Pegasus Road,
Blackbird Leys

Thursday: 7.00pm
Friday: 10am

Tel: Gill 01865 730009

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Warhol on the wall at Orchard Meadow

Pupils make colourful faces at an art exhibition held by Blackbird Leys school

Picture: Roy Simmonds

"FACES" WAS THE theme of an art exhibition held by Orchard Meadow School. Parents and other visitors had the chance to see what Orchard Meadow pupils have been working on.

Works of art included a collection of pupil portraits done in Andy Warhol's distinctive Pop Art style. There was also a clever piece which arranged individual drawings of faces into a larger face, which could be seen when the viewer stepped back.

Parents visiting the exhibition got involved with creating a mosaic. When the mosaic is finished, it will spell out a welcoming message and be displayed on the front of the school.

The exhibition happened on 27 March.

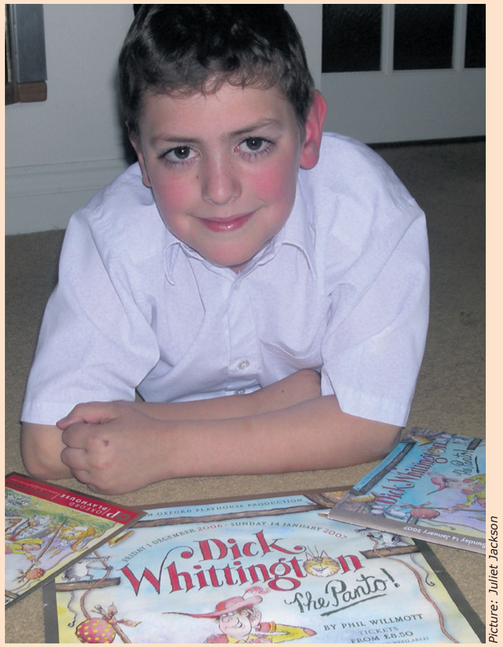
Picture: Roy Simmonds

Above: Pupils depict themselves in Pop Art style

Right: Parents work with their children to create a mosaic

Reaching for the stars

Juliet Jackson meets a Leys lad who's on the road to acting fame.



Picture: Juliet Jackson

LOCAL BOY HARRY Pudwell is only ten years old, but he's already well on the way to becoming a star.

He first decided he wanted to be an actor after seeing a production of Cats and wishing to be in it. Since then, it's been all about the drama. "Everyone was telling me I was a born actor," he says and so he "pestered and pestered us until we sent him to drama school" says his mother, Tracy, a teaching assistant at Harry's school, St John Fisher Primary. So, in mid-September, he started at Stagecoach Theatre Arts School in Marston, where Harry has lessons in dance, singing and drama. "Before he started, he had a lot of trouble, lots of frustration within himself, but since he's been acting, he's much happier in himself because he's got a release," Tracy tells us. Acting is clearly not just a hobby for Harry, it's a passion; it's the dream.

It's a dream that looks about set to come true. Only two weeks after joining Stagecoach, he was given an audition to appear in 'Dick Whittington'. Out of the three hundred children that auditioned, only sixteen were going through, and only ten in Harry's age group. Tough odds!

But, despite having had only two sessions with Stagecoach, Harry nailed it, was given four small parts which included a rat, a fish and a Londoner, and started rehearsals in November.

The play was shown from the 1st December to the 14th January, with two shows every day. However, because the law does not allow children to work every day, there were two teams: the red team and the blue team. They acted on alternate days, the blue team kicking things off on the 1st. Harry was in the red team, and one performance happened to land on his birthday (22nd December) and, of course, everyone made a big fuss; a better than ordinary birthday, I'm sure!

"I wasn't so nervous that I was shaking, but I was nervous. After that, it was just excitement," says Harry of the performances, getting up in front of all those people at nine/ten years old is a big feat, and not everyone could've done it.

Despite needing a lot of time off school for rehearsals and these performances, his school remained very supportive, with a lot of people coming out to see Harry in the play, even some of the teachers went! All were very impressed. It seems now that, for Harry, the sky is the limit! In fact, the sky seems to be where Harry's aiming for – he'd like to play Doctor Who or even James Bond one day! When asked why he likes these two characters so much, he says; "I just like [Doctor Who's] cheekiness" and Bond's "wittiness..... Well, and the cars!" Boys and their cars, eh?

If he had to pick between the two, he says he'd pick James Bond, favouring a film role over television, but not just for the glitzy premieres and red carpet walks.

It's not about being rich and famous - although that is a bonus - it's simply about doing what he loves for a living. Despite having a long way to go to get to the rich and famous stage, he's making the first secure steps on the journey.

Harry recently auditioned for a part in an upcoming film (The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas), which, unfortunately, he didn't get but it didn't dampen his determination at all. St John Fisher are soon to be putting on a production of Cats and Harry is very keen to get a big part, and what with his experience of performing already, I'm almost certain he'll get one.

If he does, it is sure to be the first of many as Harry is about to sign up with the Stagecoach Agency which will give him an agent who can put him up for more auditions, hopefully gaining him more parts. He has also just had some photographs taken, so he can start building up a portfolio.

Harry already has a lot going for him; his natural enthusiasm and confidence bloom, and his mother says he has "fantastic memory" makes learning lines, lyrics and dance steps easy for him. This would make him a fabulous asset to any production company as we can all imagine how frustrating it would be to have to go over a scene again and again because one person can't get one line right!

Acting for Harry is not just a whimsical fancy; it's a career choice and one that he's set to stick with. Even though it's a lot of work and the big trek every week to Marston, both he and mum Tracy say it's worth it. At the moment, Harry has no upcoming parts confirmed yet, but keep watching this space, as anything could happen in the next six months!

Have you ever though about setting up your own business?

WOMEN IN ENTERPRISE

The Women In Enterprise project is a FREE government funded initiative to raise awareness and train women to be able to start their own social enterprise.

What is a social enterprise?
Social enterprises are businesses with a social or environmental conscience, run to generate profit for public benefit. Proceeds are reinvested back into the business or local community rather than being for private gain.

Interested?
The first step is to attend an awareness day which will be held in your area. Find out all about social enterprise and the opportunities open to women. There will be guest speakers from people already involved plus details of training courses that will be running in your area. There will also be advice and support for women currently involved with existing social enterprises.

Telephone 01865 550827 for courses starting in September

Dates of Awareness Events:

7th June 2007– Oxford & Cherwell Valley College
Blackbird Leys, 10.00am– 2pm

21st May 2007– Oxford & Cherwell Valley College
Blackbird Leys, Business In Construction, 10.00am– 12pm

Lunch provided, FREE event
To book a place please contact Helen McLuckie
Tel 01865 550227 Email: HMcLuckie@ocvc.ac.uk

All awareness events and training courses are FREE. Financial assistance is available to help towards costs of travel and childcare whilst attending training days.

Oxford Women's Training (OWT) enables women to gain skills, knowledge and confidence in a women-friendly learning environment.

oxford womens TRAINING

We specialise in providing training in non-traditional, practical and technical skills where there are growing job opportunities. Our range of courses cater for beginners, improvers and those wanting to progress to an advanced level. All our courses lead to nationally recognised qualifications.

Daytime courses run during school hours and within the school term. Financial assistance towards childcare and travel costs may be available for women on certain types of benefits.

FREE: Build a Career in Construction
6 week FREE COURSE

This course will introduce you to a variety of trade skills including: carpentry, tiling, plastering, plumbing, kitchen fitting and painting & decorating.
Work placements in the Construction Industry are offered
Financial assistance is available.

When: Mon, Tues & Weds
Starting Monday 11th June
9.30am - 2.25pm

Jobs 4 The Girls:
6 week FREE COURSE

This 6-week, 2-days-a-week course is great for those interested in a career in construction. Work experience and career guidance offered.

The course covers carpentry, tiling, kitchen fitting, plumbing, painting & decorating

When: Monday & Friday
Starting Mon 11th June
9.30am – 4.00pm

Oxford & Cherwell Valley College
Cuddesdon Way
Blackbird Leys
Oxford
OX4 6HN

gmoraveg@ocvc.ac.uk

Tel: 01865 550827

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30TH JULY–24TH AUG 2007

TENT PROJECT

Registration Day
Friday 27th July
at BBL Youth Centre
10 – 4pm

BLACKBIRD LEYS COMMUNITY CENTRE

£1.50 a day

POP IDOL PROJECT

STREET DANCE

BIKE PROJECT

for further info contact Marsha on 07731144056 / 395927

ARTHRITIS - Do we really have to "put up with it"?

Arthritis - the leading cause of disability worldwide - is often the result of natural wear and tear - so we're usually told it's an inevitable part of getting older. But Osteopath Dr Barry Harker, who holds regular pain clinics at the Leys Health Centre, describes how the distressing symptoms of arthritis can often be dramatically reduced . . . and without the need for powerful painkillers.

IN HEALTHY JOINTS the bones should never come into contact since their surfaces are coated with a shiny, slippery lining of cartilage. This almost frictionless joint surface is unfortunately quite delicate and easily damaged by physical injury and disease, and it gradually deteriorates with age leading to reduced joint mobility and to various degrees of pain and stiffness. This is arthritis. In more advanced cases joints can become severely deformed and may eventually seize up completely.

Arthritis is really an 'umbrella' term covering dozens of different conditions. A full discussion of them all would be quite beyond the scope of this article so here I shall deal only with the commonest form, osteo-arthritis (OA). As might be expected the joints most at risk in this classic 'wear-and-tear' disease are load-bearing joints such as knees, hips and spine, and our over-used fingers and toes are also frequently involved. But in fact just about any of the body's 300 or so movable joints could be affected.

Typically, OA shows as 'morning stiffness' which eases rapidly with movement but often returns later in the day with use. Understandably we tend to favour the painful parts, placing increased strain on other muscles and joints, and this can lead to many secondary problems. The pain and stiffness get steadily worse and lack of use of the affected limb results in muscle wasting and joint instability, leaving joints more vulnerable to yet further injury - a typical 'vicious circle'. Furthermore, exercise tends to suffer and weight gain follows, adding insult to injury.

OA disrupts sleep, reduces manual dexterity and interferes with many aspects of work and leisure activity, so the impact on quality of life - and even on earning potential - may be utterly devastating.

Interestingly, most OA sufferers I see actually come to me with other problems, having previously been told that OA is untreatable. The 'advice' received has been that they'll just have to take it easy and learn to live with it. Some, feeling abandoned, demoralised and desperate, try to survive on a diet of potentially dangerous painkillers or seek relief from a variety of 'alternative remedies', many of which are aggressively promoted but lacking essential safety and efficacy data.

But, in fact, o steopathy can do much to alleviate the pain and discomfort of OA without recourse to powerful drugs or inadequately tested mystery products. Of course, the only way to repair damaged bone and cartilage is by surgery, but many of the debilitating symptoms of arthritis are actually due to the body's RESPONSE to the OA, not the joint damage itself, and this CAN be treated very effectively.

Osteopathy is not just about bad backs and sciatica! It's a safe, gentle, medically approved way of treating a large number of painful and distressing conditions, including arthritis, through gentle mobilisation of tight and stiffened tissues, toning up of wasted muscles and restoration of mobility. Even simple advice on avoiding certain types of food can dramatically improve quality of life. Osteopaths can also help make sense of the confusion surrounding the many 'natural remedies' on the market. Remember, the rigorous testing of pharmaceuticals put in place for our protection doesn't usually apply to such products if they are only described as 'nutritional supplements' and extravagant claims should always be treated with suspicion. If it sounds too good to be true - it usually is!

If you would like to know how osteopathy could help with arthritis or other painful conditions, advice is only a phone call away. Your GP can guide you, or simply ring Dr Harker on 01628 477965.

New website means fresher news

Catch up with the local news every week with our revamped website:

www.leysnews.co.uk

The new Leys News website is now officially launched. The new website will contain all the latest news as well as a "Dates for your diary" section telling you what's happening.

There is also an extensive archive where you can browse through Leys News stories from the past.

The website was redesigned with the help of Awards for All, who gave Leys News a grant to carry out community training. People taking part in our training courses will gain access to extra training materials, all downloadable from the new-look site.

The site was created by local designer and artist Julian Dourado, who also designs the print version of Leys News. He is now in the process of training staff and volunteers to upload stories to the site.

We plan to update the website with news at least once a week, which means that you can keep up to date with local stories without waiting for the paper edition of Leys News to land on your doormat.

Lost and found at 75 years old!

Leys lady Betty has found a new lease of life after losing two stone in weight – at 75 years old.

LAST YEAR, BETTY was a size 22/24 and decided it was time to tackle her weight, so she began attending the Friday morning Slimming World group at Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre. She came to the group looking for a little something different, and certainly found it.

Within three weeks of coming to Slimming World, Betty had lost half a stone. More success followed as she was crowned Slimmer of the Week three times.

After a year of coming to the Slimming World group and following its Food Optimising system, Betty has transformed herself, slimming down to a trim size 16/18.

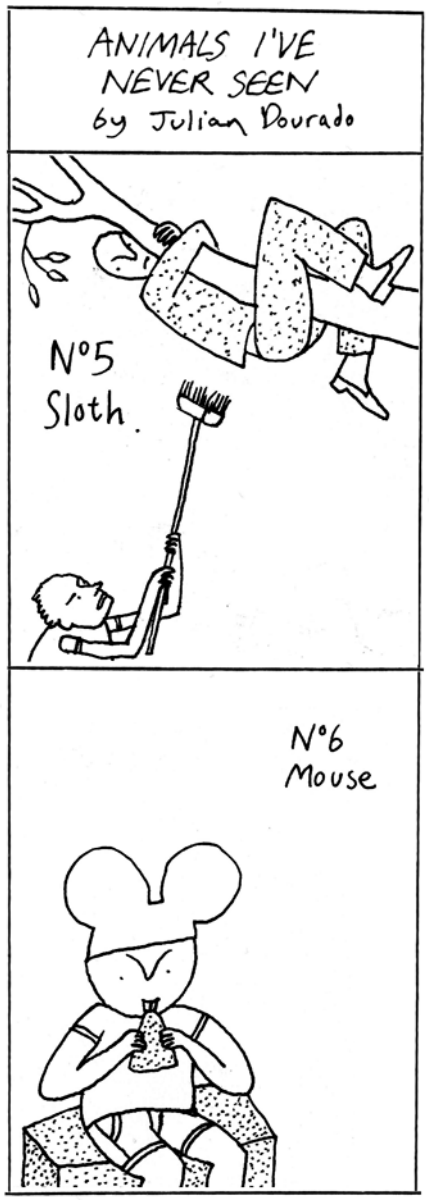
As a result, Betty has become much more active. She recently went walking all over Weymouth, climbing stiles with elegance and style. Her next trip is to Corfu, where her hotel is at the top of 150 steps!

Betty has also found a new hobby since her Slimming World weight loss – gardening. For the first time she is weeding and planting – bending down is so much easier now. Gardening is something she would not have considered before her diet success.

Slimming World consultant Gill Jackson, who helped Betty on the path to weight loss, said: "We all know how even a few extra pounds can stop us from trying new activities and at 75 it can be just that much harder. But with Food Optimising, Betty can eat many many foods without having to worry about weighing and measuring. Congratulations, Betty, on your new body, new garden and new hobby!"

You might expect Betty to bid goodbye to Slimming World now her weight loss goals are achieved, but she is still attending the group every Friday. She is in charge of the scales and is determined to help others become as successful as herself.

Before and After
Left: Betty last year
Right: Betty now



SOUTH AFRICAN DIRECTOR **YAEL FARBER** RETURNS TO THE PLAYHOUSE WITH THE **FARBER FOUNDRY** COMPANY.

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Tue 12 – Sat 16 June
Box Office: 01865 305305
www.oxfordplayhouse.com
Tickets: £10 - £23
(concessions available)

Oxford Playhouse gratefully acknowledges the support of its core funders:

Registered Charity No. 900039
Production supported by

Starlight Library Opens in the Leys

Launch party at the Starlight Library

SATURDAY, 31 MARCH saw the launch party of the Multicultural Book and Toy Library at Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground. A Local Network Fund grant of £1,200 from the Oxfordshire Community Foundation was awarded to Starlight Black Child Mixed Heritage Group to set up the library. They were one of fifteen organisations that benefited from this Fund.

The grants manager of the Oxfordshire Community Foundation, Wally Cox, said: "We are delighted to contribute towards this valuable group. We try to focus our grants on small, grass-roots community organisations which are making small but significant differences to the lives of children and young people."

Ms Sue Funge, a volunteer and Chair of the Starlight Black Child Mixed Heritage Group, said: "This grant means so much to our group. We can not only offer our own children books and toys that celebrate multiculturalism and provides them with an opportunity to learn about black history, we can also offer this service to members of the local community here in Blackbird Leys and Greater Leys."

All families with black children of mixed heritage are welcome to join from across the county. Also local residents, regardless of racial or cultural background, in the Blackbird Leys and Greater Leys area are particularly welcome to come along and see the range of books and toys on offer and join the library too.

The books include story board books for a young baby through to novels for teenagers. The group is particularly proud of the number of books about black history and famous black people which can help to educate us about their important contribution to British society, both in history and in contemporary society. Christine Chambers, Vice Chair, commented "given it is two hundred years since the abolition of slavery this should surely become an important part of our education".

The toys reflect a celebration of multicultural Britain, with a number of puzzles, dolls and toys that can also help with the acquisition of language and an understanding of numbers. The group intend to hold further fundraising events to continue to develop the library and widen its membership.

The library will commence on Wednesday, 18 April between 5.00pm and 6.30pm at Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground. It will open fort-nightly from this date during term time.

The cost of membership is £5 per family and any item can be hired for two weeks for just 10p. If anyone is interested in receiving an application form, please telephone Oxford 776691, e-mail StarlightEnt7788@aol.com or download the relevant forms by clicking on www.starlightenterprise.co.uk and going to the web page Starlight Black Child Mixed Heritage Group.

Teresa helps you get healthy

Feeling fit and full of life? If not, help is at hand. Zoe Millington from Oxford Healthy Living Partnership introduces a new recruit to the Healthy Living team.

GET FIT AND healthy for the summer! And have your own personal HealthTrainer to help you do it.

Our new recruit, Teresa Mortimer, could be the woman to motivate you to lose weight, eat a better diet, do more exercise, cut down on the drink, or whatever else you need to do to feel healthier! You could do these things on your own, but it is easier with someone to keep you on track and to help with any problems that crop up.

Teresa has lived in Blackbird Leys for over 15 years, and says, "I'm thrilled to be taking part in such an exciting opportunity for local residents and Health Trainers alike."

She will be joining our existing Health Trainer, Anne Thompson. Anne has been working on the project since July 2006 and says, "It's been great working with local residents.I've been impressed with people taking the initiative to call me, andI'm really proud of the changes they've made."

To get in touch with your local Health Trainers you can call Anne Thompson on 07876475033 or Zoe Millington (project co-ordinator) on(01865) 467327.

Teresa is so new that she hasn't got her work phone yet! Her number will be available in June - in the mean time you can leave a message with Zoe.

Eggciting time at Windale School

Bridget and Lorrain from Windale School tell Leys News about the school's Easter Fair.

Windale School Easter Fair took place on Thursday 22nd March. Some of the school classes made various different cakes, with help from the children's parents. Some children also made eggcups and different candles with tea lights inside them to sell at the fair.

There were several other stalls in the main hall that were selling plants, balloons and other things. They also had a tombola stall. Many parents helped out on the stalls.

The afternoon was well attended and everybody had a good time. We raised £316.00 to go towards the adventure playground and £50 for Shepherds Hill Preschool.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody who helped on the day.

All the school's classes took part in different ways:

Nursery, Reception and years 1 and 2 made chocolate birds' nests
Years 3 and 4 made lovely painted egg cups
Years 5 and 6 created fab and funky tealights

We would like to thank everyone for coming along to help raise this amount. Thank you once again.

Baby joy for Leys parents

Martin Garvey with his newborn sons, Seàn and Christopher.

A LEYS COUPLE are seeing double after the birth of twin boys. Seàn Gerard Victor Garvey and Christopher Michael Thomas Garvey were born to proud parents, Emily and Martin on April 23rd.

Seàn, the elder, weighed 6lb4oz at birth. Younger brother, Christopher, followed half an hour later weighing 6lb11oz. The babies were born at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Headington.

Although twins can often be a handful, Emily and Martin report that the twins have been very well behaved so far.

Oxford Mela

Traditional sports from all around the world will feature at a free family event on Sunday 17th June.

Oxford Mela, a Community Cohesion event, will take place in Cowley Marsh Park from 10am to 5pm.

The morning will feature sports from all around the world, including football, kabbadi, netball and martial arts.

The afternoon will include live music, food, drumming workshops and a bouncy castle. There will also be dance workshops including Bollywood dancing, belly dancing and raqus sharqui (Egyptian dancing).

The event is being organised by the Neighbourhood Renewal Business Unit at Oxford City Council in partnership with Thames Valley Police and Oxford Brookes University.

Want to Advertise in *Leys News*?

To place an advert please contact our office manager on 01865 711756.

. . . music reviews . . .

The gothy, the rocking and the underwhelming

Oxford Zodiac gave smaller bands a chance to shine on the Give It A Name tour... but the same bands struggled in a larger London venue. Juliet Jackson gives her verdict.

ON FRIDAY 20th April, the Zodiac played host to The Give It A Name Introduces tour. The Zodiac gig gave the smaller bands on the bill some headlining glory, namely: Hit The Lights, Kill Hannah and Kids In Glass Houses.

The following week, I went to the festival proper at Earls Court to see how these lesser-known bands fared with the much bigger venue, a much less interested crowd and how they compared to the intimidating headlining bands.

First to play on the Friday were Kill Hannah, who went down less of a storm and more of an annoying drizzle. Aside from the very few hardcore fans down at the front, the rest of the crowd remained largely uninterested and KH didn't do a lot to win them over. With their immaturely coiffed haircuts, poorly imitating that of Robert Smith, and their unoriginal, clichéd song names ('Black Poison Death', 'Raining All The Time' and 'Love You To Death' to name a few), and equally unoriginal pop hooks and riffs, Kill Hannah would have done better had they stayed at home.

In complete contrast to this, Kids In Glass Houses, who played the following day, despite being only the second band to play, manage to whip the crowd into action, enhancing their already growing reputation as a band to look out for, and doing nothing to hurt Wales's reputation as a home of great British rock. On the Sunday, Hit The Lights, who have the highest position on the bill out of the three, unfortunately didn't fare an awful lot better than Kill Hannah. Having more credibility and a lot less for cynics to mock stood them in good stead, but the crowd reaction wasn't what they were wishing for, I'm sure. As with KH, excluding the few diehard fans at the front, HTL didn't cause much of a stir, much of the crowd choosing that time to get food and have a rest, or to go and line-up for the Hellogoodbye signing that was on at the same time. Maybe it was bad timing that meant this performance was not quite shining, or maybe it was just the fact that HTL have a way to go in the way of stage presence and how to hold a crowd – Me? I'm thinking the latter.

It's safe to say, for all three bands, that they have a long way to go before they can fill that size of venue as a headlining act, and they may not ever make it that far – but they're sure as hell going for it, Give It A Name being one of those less-than-successful performances they'll laugh about in years to come.

Angels fall in my estimation

Music reviewer Juliet Jackson is less than impressed with a Leys country band.

OK, I WILL admit, country music is not my thing; but I put Fallen Angels' CD in the player with an open, unbiased mind so I could write a fair review; hoping to write a good review.

Unfortunately, having finished all six songs on the CD, I am quite glad there are no more. They weren't awful as such, just a little too repetitive and they went on at least a minute too long. The stand out track would have to be 'Guess You Had To Be There'; simply because it's a ballad and the rest are more up-tempo. I am a sucker for a ballad, so this was my favourite off the CD (though, is that really saying much?); and the arpeggiated guitar intro was quite pleasant. However, I don't think I'd ever choose to listen to it (unless my only other options were the rest of the songs on this CD) because, as I did say at the beginning, country isn't my thing and while I didn't dislike this song so much, I wouldn't say I liked it.

Fallen Angels have tried too hard to be different; with the a capella intro and clicking fingers in 'Singing The Blues' and the almost chant-like, wannabe stadium rock sing along section in 'Jambalaya' next to the usual country guitar and twangy voice, it just doesn't fit. It's almost as if they had the songs written, then sat down and had a discussion about how to make themselves 'stand out' or make themselves 'different'. The quirky little additions just don't sound like they came about naturally; they sound too forced. Fallen Angels would have done much better if they forgot about trying to impress people and just played normal, country music; nothing special, nothing 'different'.

Fans of country music may well think differently, so don't swear them off on the basis of this review. But for me, it was all very well-intended; just not very well received.

Oxfordshire Crossroads (reg. charity) require

Weekend Care Support workers

to work with disabled people in the community.

- Own transport required.
- Training given.
- CRB required.
- Wages after training £9.50 per hour.

Contact: Crossroads, 3 Hurst Street, Oxford,
Tel: 01865 260280.
Email: care@oxfordshirecrossroads.org.uk

Community Caretaker
Greater Leys - Oxford
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Catalyst Communities Housing Association manages more than 10,000 rented, leasehold and special needs homes in West London and the South East.

Part of the Catalyst Housing Group, providing over 15,000 homes in London and the South East.

Reporting to the Maintenance Manager, your role will be to ensure that the communal parts of our estates and our community centres are kept secure, safe, clean and tidy, and to carry out minor repairs. In this challenging role, we will require you to:

- Provide a high-quality caretaking service to all of our residents
- Ensure the upkeep of communal areas on our estates
- Maintain and help promote our community centres
- Keep outside paths, garden areas and car parks clean and tidy
- Deal with graffiti, dumped vehicles and furniture
- Provide an efficient minor repairs service and report major repairs
- Supervise and assist contractor services

To succeed, you must:

- Have substantial experience of a similar role
- Be physically fit, have a clean driving licence, be willing to work outside normal working hours when required, and live within easy reach of our base at Greater Leys, Oxford
- Have the "hands-on" skills to undertake minor repairs and maintenance
- Enjoy working with a wide range of people
- Be able to use and show initiative
- Have a strong commitment to providing a high quality service
- Have a practical working knowledge of health & safety
- Be efficient and organised in your approach

To apply, please complete an on-line application form at www.chg.org.uk/careers Alternatively phone 01865 712244 for an application form, or call in person at our office at The Farmhouse, Nightingale Avenue, Oxford OX4 7BU. If you would like to find out more about this job, staff will be available at The Farmhouse from 9am-5pm on Wednesday 6th June.

Closing date: 15th June 2007 at midday

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DOVECOTE SUMMER PLAYSCHEME
4 TO 12 YEARS OLDS

10 am - 3 p.m.
Monday 30th July until Thursday 23rd August
(1st 2 weeks or 2nd 2 weeks only)
£4 per child per day + trip money & bus fare for ice skating
Registration will be held at the Barn, Nightingale Ave. Blackbird Leys
Friday 13th July at 9.15 am.
ALL FEES WILL BE REQUIRED ON THE DAY OF REGISTRATION
Telephone Carol on Oxford 712299 for further information
Forms can be collected from the Dovecote office before hand to ease the wait/save time on registration day

Cowley Road Carnival 2007

The Carnival as we have come to know and love it is back – with five stages and six sound systems, Carnival 2007 is set to yet again be the biggest and best event in Oxfordshire!

THE MUCH LOVED procession is returning, starting from the Plain at midday then parading up the Cowley Road to St Mary's Church. Its theme of *Fire!* is sure to keep everyone hot.

We also celebrate the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and 1000 years of arrivals to Oxfordshire. As a county we should be proud of our strong rich mix of cultures and representation of each area of the globe.

For the latest information on the Carnival, including running orders and samples of some of the groups performing visit www.cowleyroadcarnival.org

Cowley Road Carnival 2007
Sunday 1 July
noon – 6pm

Picture: indymedia.org.uk/Eileen Cameron-Kirby

The whole community enjoys the carnival in brilliant sunshine

Picture: indymedia.org.uk/Katy Beinart

Carnival Queen spreads her wings

Would you like to see your business here?

Leys News is always on the lookout for local business stories. If you think we'd like to hear about your business, please drop us a line. We like stories about:

- Brand new businesses
- Businesses with an unusual product
- Businesses with an interesting story to tell
- Businesses helping the community
- Businesses affected by current affairs

Perhaps your shop sold out of ice lollies on the hottest day of the year, or one of your staff is doing a sponsored run for charity. It doesn't have to be happy news - stories about threats to your business are newsworthy too.

If we like the sound of your story, we'll feature you on our business page. Thousands of Leys residents will read about you - and that's got to be good for business.

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Colour in to win!

Enter our colouring competition to win a family day out

LEYS CHILDREN HAVE been given the chance to win a day out at indoor play centre Jamboray.

All you have to do is colour in the picture below and send it in to Leys News at the usual address, remembering to include your name, age and postal address. There are two age categories for the competition: under-5s and 5-to-10-year-olds.

The winner in each category will win a free family pass (2 adults and 2 children) to Jamboray, which is found at Ozone Leisure Park, a short drive or cycle from the Leys.

At Jamboray, children can play in seven exciting zones, from the Discovery Zone (water and ball play) to the Arts and Crafts Zone, where children can get creative.

Meanwhile, parents can relax with a fresh coffee or enjoy lunch while the children play to their hearts' content. Jamboray is different from other indoor play centres because of the amount of thought that has gone into taking care of parents as well as their children. As a result, it's a real break for adults as well as for kids.

All competition entries must reach the Leys News offices by Saturday 30th June. Entries will be judged shortly after the closing date. The winner will be announced in the next issue of Leys News. Winning pictures will also be displayed on the walls at Jamboray.

Postal address for entries: 26 Kingfisher Green, Greater Leys, Oxford OX4 7BX

Colour-in

Name _____ Age _____

THE LEISURE CENTRE
Pegasus Road,
Blackbird Leys

Thursday: 7.00pm
Friday: 10am

Tel: Gill 01865 730009

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Want to represent your town in the biggest free annual poetry competition? Then this is for you. . . .

ONE POET FROM each UK town will be chosen to represent their home town in the National Poetry Anthology. Each winner will receive a free copy of the anthology and one overall winner will also receive £1000.

Anyone can enter and to be in with a chance. All you have to do is send three unpublished poems, on any subject (up to 20 lines and 160 words) to the address below by 30th June.

Entries to:
United Press Ltd
Admail 3735
London
EC1B 1JB

For more information, go to: www.unitedpress.co.uk

. . . YOUR LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES . . .

PARISH COUNCIL

Acting Chairman: Lee Cole *(see city council section below).*
Chairman: *VACANCY*
Vice Chair: *VACANCY*
Parish Clerk: Helen Shayler
Non-position holders: Chris Hatton, Rae Humberstone *(see City Council section below),* Cyril Martin, Gordon Roper, Carol Roberts.

For further details telephone 01865 734346 during office hours of 9am - 5pm, Monday - Friday. Answering service outside office hours.
The mailing address for the Parish Council is 10 Swan Street, Oxford OX29 4HU.

OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

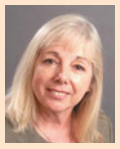
Blackbird Leys Ward:
Lee Cole - *Independent Working Class Association*
31 Long Ground, Greater Leys, OX4 7WS, 07886 463580
Surgery: Every Wednesday from 6.30 - 8.30pm at the Clockhouse, Greater Leys.

Rae Humberstone - *Labour*
75 Little Bury, Blackbird Leys, 01865 779678
Email: raehumberstone@btinternet.com
Surgery: 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month at Blackbird Leys Community Centre, 11am - 12pm

Northfield Brook Ward:
Stuart Craft - *Independent Working Class Association*
12 Brocklesby Road, Oxford OX4 4QJ, 07733 274324
Surgery: Every Wednesday from 6.30 - 8.30pm at the Clockhouse, Greater Leys.

Jane Elizabeth Lacey - *Independent Working Class Association*
71 Knights Road, Blackbird Leys, 07947 225297
Surgery: No weekly surgery, but available by telephone

OXFORDSHIRE CITY COUNCIL



Leys & Lye Division:
Val Smith - *Labour*
4 Flaxfield Road, OX4 6QD, 01865 305080
Email: val.smith@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Surgery: 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month from 11am - 12pm at Blackbird Leys Community Centre, Blackbird Leys Road

Barbara Gatehouse - *Labour*
51 Ash Grove, Headington, Oxford OX3 9JN, 01865 741060
Email: Barbara.gatehouse@oxfordshire.gov.uk

. . . WISE WORDS . . .

Augustine Kanu, a well-known face at Blackbird Leys Community Centre, shares some Wise Words from his native Nigeria.

"Ochu nwa okuku nwe ada nwa okuku nwe nwenwe ozo"

Translation: If you chase after a little chicken, you will have a fall, while the little chicken keeps on with her little run.

This saying is true in so many ways, and I think you can apply it to politics as well – although I'm not sure I should be saying that!

It is about dealing with people smaller than you and how you can get it all wrong.

Do you have some words to live by? Or just a saying that makes you smile?

Send your proverbs and sayings into Wise Words by emailing or writing to Leys News at the usual address. If your saying is in another language, please include an English translation!

. . . letters . . .

Brian Lester resigns

Blackbird Leys Parish Council chairman announces his resignation and gives a warning about the parish council's future.

WITH HEAVY HEART I decided at the parish council meeting on Tuesday 8th May to stand down as chairman. I have tried over several years with the help of others, especially Bob Avery and Lee Cole, to make a difference to our estate but when you have a population of over 15,000 residents and are only able to get 7 of the 14 members allowed on the council it is a poor show.

The residents of Blackbird Leys and Northfield Brook do not deserve your parish council and certainly do not deserve me and this is two of the main reasons I stood down.

I had to continue to the end of the meeting before I then handed in a letter of resignation as a councillor. If I had done so earlier there would not have been enough members to carry on. My colleague Bob Avery also stood down as vice chair, Sharon Cole stood down as treasurer and there wasn't anyone prepared to stand in for office, so Lee stood in as temporary chairman for the rest of the meeting.

Also at the end of the meeting Bob Avery resigned as a parish councillor. Two councillors apologised for missing the meeting, one a city councillor, and went to watch the football which left five members to continue. One other unfortunately was ill.

Perhaps this is the end of the Parish Council; it certainly will be if no-one comes forward. They need 14 members of the community on the council and I ask are you prepared to step forward and do your bit?

Finally I would like to thank those members of the community that have supported me in my efforts to make a difference to our estate over the years I was in office.

I tried my best for you all and not many appreciated this.

Brian Lester
Pegasus Road,
Blackbird Leys

Any letter published in the next issue of Leys News will win its writer a box of delicious Krispy Kreme doughnuts. Make yourself popular and write to us!

OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

WHAT DO AREA COMMITTEES DO?

The six Area Committees are responsible for the following:
ABANDONED VEHICLES, ALLOTMENTS, CEMETERIES, DECISIONS ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS, DOG WARDENS, DITCHES AND STREAMS, PUBLIC TOILETS, CAR PARKS, PARKS & COUNTRYSIDE MANAGEMENT, STREET CLEANING, STREET NAMING, COMMUNITY CENTRES.

SOUTH EAST AREA COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Ring 252249 for further information

Monday 4th June
6.00pm
Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre

Monday 2nd July
6.00pm
Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre

Monday 6th August
6.00pm
Rose Hill Community Centre

Striker Yemi says yes to United

United's Player of the year is determined to reward loyal fans with goal glory after signing a fresh two-year deal

THERE WAS GOOD news for United with Yemi Odubade agreeing a new two-year deal at the club.

The 22-year-old striker was United's Player of the Year and has become immensely popular with the fans. Yemi first impressed when playing against United in the FA Cup for Eastbourne, having had a spell at Yeovil earlier in his career, and joined the club in January 2006.

His twelve goals for the season and his pace and energy were big factors in taking United to the play-offs, and manager Jim Smith is delighted that Yemi has agreed a new deal:

"Yemi has done ever so well for us and I'm really pleased that he's staying. He has a bright future, has that enthusiasm and hunger for the game and he'll play a big part for us next season."

Yemi was just as pleased to sign the new deal:

"To be honest we talked about it before the play-offs but I wanted to stay focussed on those games and not have any distractions. Promotion wasn't to be for us this season, but that just made me more determined to stay and make sure we get it right next time. The fans played a big part in my decision. They have been absolutely unbelievable with me and I'll try and reward them with as many goals as I can next season."

Soccer Challenge Evening Courses

United's links with the Leys continues over the summer, with the highly successful Soccer Challenge evening courses at Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre

The twelve-week courses combine playing football with having fun, and have unearthed some great players over the years. It's not all about becoming a professional footballer though: the courses are open to boys and girls of ALL abilities, and all ages, and run at Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre every Tuesday evening between 4 and 5pm.

Just call Peter Rhoades-Brown, Community Officer, on 01865 337525 to book your place.

Oxford United: We will bounce back

Oxford United's chairman, Nick Merry

OXFORD UNITED'S SEASON ended in disappointment, but the overwhelming message from The U's is 'We'll bounce back.'

Having never been outside the top two all season, Jim Smith's side saw their promotion party ruined by Exeter over two legs of the Play-Off semi-final. Leading 1-0 from the first leg, United took the lead at the Kassam Stadium through Yemi Odubade but were pegged back by two goals from Exeter to force the game into extra-time.

With neither team able to find the breakthrough the match went to penalties, and United's dreams were shattered as Barry Quinn, Billy Turley and Chris Zebroski missed from the spot.

It was heartbreaking for the management, players and fans, but chairman Nick Merry had a simple message for the thousands of United fans in the Leys area:

"We will come back stronger than ever. It was a real blow not to go up, we had worked so hard towards that, but it's all about how we bounce back now. If anything it just serves to make us even more determined to get things right next season. The fans deserve success after the way they've backed us this far, and hopefully we can bring them that when the new season starts."